

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 110145 TOSEC 110804

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AGS: SOPN, US, PINT

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT EVANS AND NOVAK OP-ED PAGE COLUMN
WASHINGTON POST THURSDAY MAY 6 HEADED "A PRIMARY CRISIS FOR
MR. FORD."

2. HAVING UNDERGONE PRIMARY ELECTION HUMILIATIONS NOT EX-
PERIENCED BY A PRESIDENT SINCE WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT IN 1912,
GERALD R. FORD IS BEING BRACED WITH THIS STERN ADVICE: YOU
WILL LOSE THE NOMINATION UNLESS YOU PLACE YOUR HOUSE IN
ORDER, STARTING WITH THE SACKING OF HENRY KISSINGER AS
SECRETARY OF STATE.

3. DR. KISSINGER'S AFRICAN SAFARI, BLAMED FOR TRANSFORMING
DEFEAT INTO CATASTROPHE IN TEXAS, HAS EXPANDED THE DUMP-
KISSINGER CHORUS INTO A HOWLING MOB. PARTY LEADERS ARE ALSO
CALLING FOR PRO-FORD CAMPAIGNING INSTEAD OF ANTI-REAGAN
COUNTERPUNCHING, WHICH HIT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE BOTTOM WITH
DEMANDS FOR RELEASE OF REAGAN'S 1975 TAX RETURNS. THERE-
FORE, THESE POLITICIANS WANT AN EXPERIENCED WISE MAN TO
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 110145 TOSEC 110804

TRAVEL FULLTIME WITH PRESIDENT FORD TO PROTECT HIM FROM THE

NOXIOUS GIMMICKS DREDGED UP BY PRESS SECRETARY RON NESSEN,
AUTHOR OF THE REAGAN TAX PLOY.

4. BUT THE PRESIDENT MAY IGNORE SUCH PLEAS, PARTICULARLY IF HE STICKS WITH HIS POLITICAL OPERATIVES WHO PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY ATTRIBUTE REAGAN'S STUNNING VICTORIES TO THE "CROSS-OVER" DEMOCRATS RATHER THAN BASIC FORD CAMPAIGN PROBLEMS. THEY SEEMINGLY FAIL TO COMPREHEND THE FULL GRAVITY OF THE PRESIDENT'S CRISIS, THREATENING HIM WITH THE REPUDIATION OF AN INCUMBENT PRESIDENT, LAST SUFFERED BY CHESTER ARTHUR, IF THE CONTAGION OF PRIMARY DEFEATS SPREADS.

5. THAT CONTAGION BEGAN WITH THE MAY DAY MASSACRE IN TEXAS, A MANY-SIDED DISASTER FOR MR. FORD. THE LANDSLIDE GENERATED NOT ONLY AN ESTIMATED 10 PER CENT VOTE TURNAROUND IN INDIANA WHICH LED TO THE STUNNING UPSET OF MR. FORD THERE, BUT ALSO BROUGHT HIS LAVISHLY FINANCED CAMPAIGN TO VIRTUAL BANKRUPTCY ON THE ROAD TO DEFEAT, MR. FORD'S AGENTS ENGAGED IN PROFIT-GATE SPENDING OF NEARLY \$1 MILLION (FOUR TIMES REAGAN'S SPENDING) IN TEXAS. THE RESULT IS NOT ONLY JOB LAYOFFS AT THE FORD CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE HERE BUT A PARITY OF POVERTY BETWEEN THE REAGAN AND FORD CAMPAIGNS.

6. PERHAPS THE MOST CRITICAL ASPECT OF TEXAS, HOWEVER, WAS THE POINT OF NO-RETURN FOR HENRY KISSINGER. HIS CHAMPIONSHIP OF BLACK MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA IS BLAMED FOR THE MAGNITUDE OF REAGAN'S WIN BY FORD PARTISANS WHO ARE PUBLICLY DESCRIBING THE FORD-KISSINGER RELATIONSHIP IN EXTRAORDINARILY BLUNT TERMS. AN EXAMPLE IS REP. ED DERWINSKI OF ILLINOIS, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN AND FORD DELEGATE FROM ILLINOIS.

7. "YOU DON'T GO DOWN TO AFRICA AND PROMISE AWAY THE FEDERAL TREASURY FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE TEXAS PRIMARY," DERWINSKI TOLD US. "I THINK THE PRESIDENT IS A CAPTIVE OF HENRY K. THE SUBORDINATE IS CONTROLLING HIS CHIEF." DERWINSKI MONTHS AGO URGED MR. FORD TO FIRE KISSINGER, BUT THAT IDEA IS GENERATING NEW DISCIPLES--SUCH AS CONSERVATIVE REP. JACK KEMP OF NEW YORK, ONCE AN ARDENT KISSINGER FAN--BUT ALSO INCLUDING SOME MODERATES.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 110145 TOSEC 110804

8. BESIDES A NEW SECRETARY OF STATE, MR. FORD IS BEING PRESSED TO NAME A COOL HEAD TO TRAVEL WITH HIM AND PROVIDE INSTANT WISDOM OF THE KIND GIVEN REAGAN BY DR. MARTIN ANDERSON. THAT BECAME CLEAR THE DAY BEFORE THE INDIANA PRIMARY WHEN NESSEN TALKED THE PRESIDENT INTO DEMANDING THAT REAGAN RELEASE HIS 1975 INCOME TAX RETURNS. WHEN REAGAN RELEASED THE GROSS FIGURES BUT NOT THE ACTUAL RETURNS,

NESSEN MORALIZED THAT REAGAN HAD NOT LEARNED THE LESSONS OF WATERGATE.

9. THAT HELPED NOT AT ALL IN INDIANA, BUT GENERATED INSTANT OUTRAGE AT THE TREASURY, WHERE SECRETARY WILLIAM SIMON--A STEADFAST FORD LOYALIST--SENT WORD TO THE WHITE HOUSE THAT REAGAN'S PERSONAL INCOME TAX IS NOBODY'S BUSINESS BUT HIS OWN. OTHER REPUBLICAN POLITICIANS WERE APPALLED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD JOINED IN COUNTY-LEVEL POLITICKING.

10. NESSEN'S PLOY WAS BUT A PARTICULARLY MALADROIT ASPECT OF THE FORD CAMPAIGN'S DOMINANT THEME: UNDERMINE REAGAN. IN THE WAKE OF TUESDAY'S TRIPLE DEFEAT, PRO-FORD REPUBLICAN POLITICIANS OUTSIDE HIS CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION FEEL HE MUST TRY TO FORGET ABOUT REAGAN AND CONCENTRATE ON POSITIVE ISSUES.

11. WHETHER MR. FORD WILL TAKE ANY OF THIS ADVICE, BEGINNING WITH THE EASING-OUT OF DR. KISSINGER, IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. FAR MORE THAN THE PUBLIC GENERALLY REALIZES, THE PRESIDENT IS STRONG-MINDED TO THE POINT OF STUBBORNESS--AS IS REFLECTED BY A STRANGE INCIDENT WHILE CAMPAIGNING IN INDIANA LAST WEEKEND.

12. WINDING UP HIS HOOSIER CAMPAIGN, MR. FORD ASKED AN INDIANA REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN, REP. JOHN MYERS, FOR HELPFUL HINTS. MYERS HAD TWO: FIRST, DON'T MENTION THE PANAMA CANAL; SECOND, STOP PROMISING TO KEEP KISSINGER AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE PRESIDENT NODDED, THEN DID EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE ON BOTH POINTS AT HIS NEXT STOP.

13. JERRY FORD'S ABILITY TO TAKE ADVICE MAY BECOME CRITICAL OVER THE NEXT THREE WEEKS WHEN HE COULD WELL LOSE 8 OUT OF UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 110145 TOSEC 110804

10 PRIMARIES. SUCH LOSSES CONCEIVABLY COULD COST HIM THE NOMINATION, NOT IN TERMS OF DELEGATES BUT IN SHREDDED PRESTIGE.

14. ACCORDINGLY, THE PRESIDENT'S SUPPORTERS WHO REGARD REAGAN'S NOMINATION AS A LIMITLESS DISASTER ARE FRANTIC THAT FORD HEED THEIR COUNSEL, NOT TO MOVE RIGHT BUT TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENTIAL PEDESTAL AND SHIFT ATTENTION TO THE BOOMING ECONOMY. HE CANNOT DO THAT BY APPLAUDING HENRY KISSINGER, DEFENDING THE DICTATOR OF PANAMA AND THRASHING ABOUT WITH INNUENDO ABOUT REAGAN'S TAXES. (END TEXT.) SISCO

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